# A Compendious and most maruelous History of the latter times of the Iewes common-weale.

Syn. B. 60. 73

## Beginning where the Bible, or Scriptures leaue, and continuing to the vtter ſubuerſion and laſt deſtruction of that countrey and people.

Written in Hebrue by *Ioſeph Ben Gorion*, a noble man of the ſame Countrey, who ſawe the moſt things himſelfe, and was Author and doer of a greater part of the ſame.

*Tranſlated into Engliſh, by* Peter Morwyn, *of* Magdalen *Colledge in Oxford.*

And now newly corrected and amended by the ſaid Tranſlator.

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# THE AVTHORS Epistle to the Reader.

BEing mooued and requested of a friend, that I would take in hand to translate this part of the history of the Iewes, to the intēt that as there is amongest vs all ready in our natiue tongue, the originall beginning of that nation, & the continuance also for a long space, in the Bible, and annexed to the same: so there might be likewise an vnderstanding and declaration to all men in the English tongue, as well as in other, of the destruction of so famous a common wealth: I both thought it honest to further so good an attempte, yea and almost dishonest to repulse his request (opportunity and leasure serving me) considering also how many prophesies there be in the Scriptures, of the destruction not onely of the cittie Ierusalem, but also of the whole country, and no specialty nor notification in our tongue of the fulfilling of the same. For the performance whereof, after long weighing and debating of the matter, it was thought most conuenient, not to burthen the desirous hereof, with the prouiding of so chargeable a volume as is the great history of *Flauius Iosephus*, that writ the discourse of the same to the Romanes, togither with many other actes of other nations, nothing at all pertaining to the history of the Iewes: but that we should plenteously content mens desires, and satisfie our

prefixed end abundantly, with a farre more briefe, much leſſe coſtly, and as ſufficient a commentary for our purpoſe, nothing inferiour to the other in veritie, yea writren by the ſame *Ioſephus*, as the tenour and contents of both the bookes doe import, although he name himſelfe in this *Ben Gorion* (that is) the ſonne of *Gorion*, and in the other the ſonne of *Mattathias*, which is a thing ſo common in the Iewes genealogies, that men neede not ſeeke farre for the like, for one man to deduct his diſcent from diuers names, of Father, grandfather, or great grandfather, of the fathers ſide, or of the mothers ſide, now taking the name of the next, now of the moſt noble of his kindred. But howſoeuer the names be vnlike, the hiſtories do ſo agree, that they may well be thought to be written by one man: this vnto his countrymen the Iewes, or for them that deſire no more but a iuſt rehearſall of the things concerning that onely country: the other for the Romans, or for them that deſire to vnderſtand of the feates of the Romans in the time of that age, which we thought not to be neceſſary for our purpoſe. We determined therefore to take in hand this *Ioſeph*, or rather this his owne epitome or abridgement of his great booke, yet the whole hiſtorie of the Iewes notwithſtanding. In the tranſlation whereof, what paines is taken, not onely in reſtoring diuers wordes that were depraued and corrupted in the Latin text, yea and ſome whole members of ſentences left out, which were expreſly in the Hebrew, but alſo that the Hebraicall forms of ſpeech ſo diſcrepant from our phraſe and accuſtomed manner of ſpeaking, might be framed vnto our vulgar and familiar communication, that they might be the better vnderſtoode: I referre it vnto the iudgement of them that be expert in the tongues,

who

who if they liſt to conferre both the texts, they ſhall euery where eſpie a great diſſimilitude betweene the words of both, and ſomtime find whole members of ſentences tranſpoſed : yet I truſt they ſhall likewiſe confeſſe, both that I haue not ſwarued any thing from the ſence and meaning of the Author, which I moſt attentiuely did alwayes ponder and conſider, as the thing moſt profitable for our purpoſe, and alſo that it was neceſſary ſo to do, to faſhion it vnto our manner of ſpeaking. For whereunto ſerueth it if it ſhould not be vnderſtood? were it not as good to remaine ſtill not vnderſtoode in a ſtrange tongue, as not vnderſtoode in our own, if ſuch tranſlations word for worde, be to be counted in our tongue, being turned into our words onely? This therfore was chiefely endeuoured, that it might be framed and come moſt nigh vnto our vulgar tongue, not to our vulgar words onely : and yet it ſhould not be disframed, nor diſgreſſe from the true meaning of the Hiſtoriographer.

Seeing then that it may now be reade in our mother tongue, and vnderſtoode alſo, our hope is, that our trauaile ſhall not be loſt, but that thou likewiſe for thy part (gentle Reader) wilt diligently peruſe and reade this hiſtory, worthy of ſo great paines to be beſtowed vpon it, both for the pleaſantneſſe of the matter, and alſo for the ineſtimable profit that thou maieſt take thereby. For pleaſure, who would not be very much delighted and deſirous to vnderſtand the end, and what became at length vppon ſuch a people, that he hath hard ſo much of as euery man hath read and hard of the Iewes in the Bible, and otherwiſe? beſides the delectation, in perceiuing things of ſo great antiquity? Euery man deligh-teth to behold the pictures of auncient perſons, as

of *Hercules*, *Hector*, *Iulius Cæsar*, *Arthur*, and reuerenced them as though they were halfe Gods: how much more pleasure should it be, to behold the liuely images of their minds, which appeared in their acts and deedes, while they were here in this life, whereby he should learne to know good from euill, and by the applying of their deedes vnto our manners, with considering the euent and successe they had of their actions, we may take either an example, or some admonition, or occasion to amend our liues, wherein besides pleasure, is also profit, As when thou seest the Iewes heere afflicted with diuers kindes of miserie, because they fell from God: then maiest thou bee admonished heereby, to see the better to thine owne wayes, least the like calamities light vpon thee, vnlesse thou be so fonde to thinke God will more spare thee, which art but a wilde Oliue, and but grafted into the stocke of faith, if thou bring eyther naughtie fruite or no fruite, then he did the naturall branches the Iewes, which sprang naturallie of the roote it selfe. Thou shalt reade heere of terrible and horrible euents of sedition and rebellion, yea, there was no such cruelty exercised vpon them by their externall enemies, as they vsed among themselues one vpon another, subiects against their Princes, and subiects against subiects: in so much, that nothing hastened their destruction so greatlye, as their owne doggednesse and intestine hatred. Be thou warned therefore by their harmes, and take heede that thou maiest auoide the like. Consider moreouer and marke well, the Iewes were counted Gods people, the Romanes contrary, his enemies: as without all doubt, hauing no knowledge of God, and beeing idolaters as they were at that time, they could not bee Gods people: yet for all this, God would they should preuaile a-

gainst

gainſt the Iewes, and ſubdue them vnder their yoke. Whereby we may learne how greatly God is incenſed againſt iniquitie, inſomuch that hee will rather bring in vpon his owne children a nation more wicked, then to leaue them vnpuniſhed, to runne forward in their wicked race. Such profitable enſamples and leſſons are in this hiſtorie without number: which if I ſhould recite all, I ſhould bring the whole booke into the Preface. We will therefore be content with theſe few at this preſent, neyther as all, nor as the chiefe: deſiring and wiſhing chiefly (good Reader) that thou maieſt finde out not the chiefe onely, but all, and not onely finde them out, but note them, and imitate them in thy liuing and ordering of thy dooings: which if thou doe, then haue we the expected ende of our paines and trauaile, and thou the profit, wherewith all parties may iuſtlye, or will gladlye bee contented and ſatisfied.

# The state of the common wealth of Iury, from the Machabees, vnto the last destruction and subuersion of the same.

According vnto those things that wee haue found in the booke of Ioseph the Priest, son of Gorion, and in other bookes written according to the most certaine verity, we will draw forth and rehearse some things for the comfort that may come therof, especially seeing all the Prophets haue bent and directed their prophesies and foretellings of things to come, to this pricke, that the kingdome of the house of Dauid should be restored and florish in time to come. Therfore if there had beene any kings of the house of Dauid during the time of the second house, or secõd temple, then should we haue bin in suspẽce, yea, euen now already our hope had bẽne dasht. But there was no kingdom of the house of Dauid in that age, saue onely a certaine dominion that Zerubabel & Nehemia had. Yea, rather the kingdome remained at that time to the house of the Machabees, and them that were toward them

them, & their seruants. But now to ỹ purpose.

When Alexander the first King of the Grékes had fortified & established his kingdome, he died, being yet but a yong man, and his kingdome was diuided among foure of his captaines, as it is written, While he is yet aliue, his kingdome shalbe broken & deli-
*Dan.8.* uered into foure coasts of the heauens. He left behind him a son of tender yeares, called Archelaus, whose tutor or gouernour perceiuing him to be toward, gaue him impoisoned drinke, and made him away. These captaines made warre one vpon another, of whom one that was named Ptolomee, procured Moses law to be translated into Grécke, to the intent he might finde some occasion to pick a quarrell against Israell. For by their lawe hée sought meanes to withdraw them from their religion, according to the Psal. Many a time
*Psal.129.* haue they afflicted me from my youth vp may Israel now say. There were 70. ancient men that translated the Lawe, whom Ptolomee the king seperated one from another, putting euerie man a part in a house by himselfe. But they all agréed in one sence, albeit they changed 13. places, which was not done without miracle, that they all agréed together in the meaning and writing, as though one alone had written it. These 13. places be

these.

these. First, God created in the beginning. Heere no worde or thing is put before the name of God, and also for that in the Greeke tongue, the thing that doth, is put before, and that that is made, is placed after, lest this word Bereshith should be taken for a creator, and Elohim for a creature. The second, I will make man according to the image and likeneſſe that it should not be thought, as though hée were one that consulted with other therein. The 3. And God finished the sixt day and rested the seaventh. Least it should seéme as though he had made any thing in the seuenth day, and in it ended his worke. The 4. Goe to, I will go downe, and there will confound their language, least by speaking in the plurall number, he should haue béen thought to be many. The 5. And *Sara* laughed, speaking to them that stood by her: because Ptolomee the king should not mock them, and say; Who shewed you what she said to her selfe. The 6. Because in their furie they killed an Oxe, and in their will they brake the crib. Least the king should deride them, and aske, What hath a man to do with an Oxe. The 7. And *Moses* tooke his wife and his sonnes, and set them vpon that that could beare a man. Least the king should deride our maister Moses, because he rode vpon an

*Genes.* 1. I, for we.

*Genes.* 2. Sixt for seuenth.

*Genes.* 1. I, for we.

*Genes.* 18. With the that stood by her, for to her self.

*Genes.* 49. Crib for an Oxe.

*Exod.* 4. That that could bear a man, for an Asse.